

Fiscal Year 2020 Candidate Conservation Action Funds

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: [\[insert number auto-generated from PRISM\]F20AS00071](#)

Federal Program: Department of the Interior, United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Ecological Services Program

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.660

Authorizing Legislation: Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et. seq.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: We are collecting this information in accordance with the authorizing legislation identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 35 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100 (Expiration Date: 7/31/2021)

I. Program Description

The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to provide a means by which the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take appropriate steps to achieve the purposes of treaties and conventions set forth in the ESA. Section 2(a)(5) of the ESA authorizes the use of Federal financial assistance to encourage the States and other interested parties to develop and maintain conservation programs to safeguard the Nation's heritage in fish, wildlife and plants for the benefit of all citizens.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Ecological Services Program provides Federal financial assistance on a competitive basis to states, landowners, educators, non-profit organizations, researchers and other potential partners to secure information about candidate and other at-risk species to avert listing of species pursuant to the ESA, and to help conserve the ecosystems upon which these species depend.

II. Program Objective

The principle objective of this Candidate Conservation funding opportunity is to accomplish conservation tasks for high priority, Service-managed, candidate (based on our annual Candidate

Species Assessments) and at-risk species in the United States, such that known threats to the species may be reduced or eliminated.

These efforts are based on cooperative relationships with states, non-profit organizations, private landowners and those interested in habitat restoration or undertaking candidate and at-risk species research, surveys and monitoring, or educational outreach efforts.

III. Program Priorities

This opportunity will help to address the Department of the Interior priorities of 1) Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt by utilizing science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment; and 2) Striking a regulatory balance by ensuring that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis.

Priority will be given to proposals that (1) enhance partnerships with states, non-profit organizations, private landowners, other Federal agencies, and others, and (2) leverage our resources and authorities with those of our partners. Highest priority will be given to those projects that fund activities that will provide the States and Service with the best available science to make informed decisions on ESA listing actions. Priority should be given to projects that will secure scientific information about candidate or at-risk species and their habitat, implement restoration actions that will lead to removing threats so as to preclude the need to list, help prevent extinction of a species, or otherwise aid in improving the conservation status of a species, therefore furthering the Departmental priority of striking a regulatory balance.

Projects should: show a clear conservation benefit that will help prevent listing of a candidate or at-risk species, or remove identified threats and improve status; contribute information on species response to changes in the environment; or contribute to landscape level priorities (for example, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (<http://www.fws.gov/science/SHC/lcc.html>), target watersheds for mussel conservation, Ecoteam or landscape level priorities, etc.);

Copies of species' approved Candidate Species Assessments are available on the Service's Ecological Services Program website. Go to our Species Information website at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/index.html>. The Service has prioritized at-risk species in their national listing work plan by assigning a priority number. The at-risk species with a priority number of 3 or 4 would be especially important to work on – see <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/listing-workplan.html> for a list of species on the work plan, and see <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/listing-workplan-prioritization.html> for a description of the prioritization methodology.

Work may be done via cooperative agreements and project grants. Land acquisition or easement purchase is not allowed under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Projects for NMFS-managed species are not included in this funding opportunity.

II. Federal Award Information

This funding opportunity uses Service discretionary funding, if available. The amount of actual funding available will vary from year to year. Funding may not be available every year in each office. Applicants are required to coordinate with the Service prior to submitting a proposal for consideration. Grants or cooperative agreement, for example, may be used for this funding opportunity. If funds are awarded through a cooperative agreement with the Service, the Service will be substantially involved in projects under this funding opportunity; the level of involvement will vary by project or agreement.

Applicants may submit proposals that address new or ongoing work. If the proposal includes a continuation of previous or ongoing work, a very brief discussion of accomplishments to date and a justification for the continuation of the work must be included in the project description in order to receive full consideration.

Applicants may submit proposals for multi-year projects, with a period of performance for up to three years. Submissions for multi-year projects must provide the total budget for the multi-year project as well as the budget for each year of the project. We may award funds to these types of projects, but will only initially provide incremental funding for one year of the project. Funding for years two and three will be based on the availability of funding through appropriations in future years.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

State and local governments/agencies; institutions of higher education, including public, private, state colleges and universities; non-profits that have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education; Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally-recognized tribal governments); city, county or township governments; individuals, Native American tribal governments (Federally-recognized); for-profit organizations; small businesses.

Applicants are expected to have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the biology of the involved candidate or at-risk species and its ecosystem, including preferably having worked with the species in the field.

U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations with 501c3 Internal Revenue Status (IRS) must provide a copy of their Section 501c3 status determination letter received from the IRS.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Not required, but we will prioritize projects based on how they enhance partnerships with states, non-profit organizations, private landowners, and others, and leverage our resources and authorities with those of our partners.

C. Other Eligibility Criteria

The following additional criteria apply to all Candidate Conservation funding opportunities and must be satisfied for a proposal to be considered for funding:

- a. A proposal cannot include Service Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) costs.

- b. State administrative costs must either be assumed by the state or included in the proposal in accordance with Federal requirements.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name) or any entity with an exception approved by the Service under [2 CFR 25.110\(d\)](#). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and then register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application. Federal award recipients must continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). See the “[Submission Requirements](#)” section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration. The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prohibition on Issuing Awards to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements: Domestic (U.S.) non-Federal entities requiring their employees or contractors to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit, or otherwise restrict, such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information are not eligible to compete for or receive a Federal award. See [Pub. L. 113-235, Title VII, Division E, Section 743](#) for more information.

Excluded Parties: The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The Service cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

IV. Application Requirements

A. Requesting Paper Application Package

Contact the Service Regional office to request a paper application package if you do not have access to the internet to download the application package forms (see **VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**).

B. Application Form and Content Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), must complete the [SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual](#) form. All other applicants must

complete the standard [SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance](#). All of the required application forms are available on the “Packages” tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, and signed and dated. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the “Federal” funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the “Other” box, and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the “Budget Narrative” section below).

2. SF 424, Assurances

Applicants must submit the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. Complete either the [SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) or the [SF-424D, Assurances for Construction Programs](#), as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the “Packages” tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424 Assurances forms include a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing the required SF-424 Assurances form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

3. Project Summary

Project Proposals should include a Project Summary Page containing the following information: Project Name; Applicant; Applicant Address and Contact Information (address, phone, email); Type of Project (Candidate Conservation). They should also include one clear and succinct paragraph summarizing the proposed project and its location; Requested Funding; and Matching Funding (if any).

4. Project Narrative

The application package should contain a separate document discussing the proposed project in detail. The document should include the following sections:

- *Project Description*, including a list of targeted species, and how the proposed project will reduce or eliminate threats to the species or otherwise provide information to preclude listing under the ESA;
- *Project Location*, including a map of the project site/location and in detail describe where the work will be done, applicable habitat type(s) to be affected and number of acres or stream miles (as applicable), and relevant ecosystem/watershed characterization.
- *Project Objectives*, clearly articulating measurable/quantifiable milestones that address the Program Priorities,
- *Methodology*, describing what the proposed project activities are and how these will achieve the stated milestones;
- *Coordination with State and/or other Federal agencies*, if needed; how the proposed project leverages other funding to address high priority conservation actions needed for the species (e.g., complements a landscape level Habitat Conservation Plan project, etc.)

- *Duration* of proposed project (3 years maximum to spend funds). The proposal must involve a discrete activity(ies) (each activity included in the proposal must have an identified starting point and end point)
- *Budget*, for the project that is detailed enough to know what are the costs of the various aspects of the project, including involved partners and their financial or in-kind contributions towards this project; contribution of partners and number of partners (also see sections D and E below).

The project proposal should also indicate whether partial funding of the project is practicable, and, if so, what specific portion(s) of the project could be implemented with what level of funding. A project proposal that is a part of a longer-term initiative will be considered; however, the proposed project's objectives, benefits, and tasks must stand on their own, as there are no assurances that additional funding would be awarded in subsequent years for associated or complementary projects.

- *Criteria for Success*, i.e., the success performance criteria that will apply to this project (i.e., What incremental improvements would this funding be expected to produce beyond what has already been achieved for the species, and what will be measured to determine the success of the project, such as linear distance of stream bank restored; number of mussels successfully re-introduced); and
- *Deliverables with Timeframes*, including what will be provided to the Service at the close of the project.
- *Supporting Information*, any additional supporting information may also be submitted (e.g., for example, copies of relevant permits currently or previously held that authorize similar activities for the targeted species).
- *Description of Entities Undertaking the Project*, provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis. Please provide credentials demonstrating that project participants have the necessary biological and scientific education and experience to be able to complete the project satisfactorily.

5. SF-424, Budget Information

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form. Complete either the [SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs](#) or the [SF-424C, Budget Information for Construction Programs](#), as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles as detailed in the Service's "[Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions](#)." Please note: List funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In the "Budget Summary" section, use the first row for funding requested from this Federal program. Use subsequent row(s) for other Federal funding. Enter each Federal program's CFDA number(s) in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number(s) for this Federal program appears on the first page of this Funding Opportunity.

6. Budget Narrative

Describe and justify requested budget items and costs. Detail how the SF-424 Budget Information, Object Class Category totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time. Describe any item of cost that requires prior approval under the Federal cost principles. See [2 CFR 200.407](#) “Prior written approval (prior approval)” for more information. If equipment purchased previously with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source.

Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program separately from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program’s CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

7. Indirect Costs: Individuals

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget and skip the next section.

8. Indirect Costs: Organizations

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization’s cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the [IBC Email Submission Form](#). See the [IBC Website](#) for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement

All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application to the Service, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.
- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.
- A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: “Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.” or “Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.”]
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs)]. However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in [2 CFR 200.68](#). We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization’s indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in [2 CFR 200.68](#). We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

- A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either “Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program” or “Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network”], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 “Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)”. We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.
- A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

9. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, including their employees and subrecipients, in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest include direct or indirect financial interests; close personal relationships; positions of trust in outside organizations; consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization; and decision-making authority related to the proposed project. Conflicts of interest are those circumstances real or perceived that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, or the applicant’s employees or subrecipients, in matters pertaining to the proposed project. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal program receiving this application or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of their proposal. The term employee means any individual to be engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award application. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the rejection or disqualification of the application.

10. Single Audit Reporting Statement

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant’s fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse’s Internet Data Entry System](#). U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if

your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

11. Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate [SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance](#) form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

12. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#) if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. [See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100](#) for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

13. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, *"There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel."* If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with *"We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing."*

14. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Evidence of non-profit status:** If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance or Application for Federal Assistance-Individual**
- SF-424B or D, Assurances**
- Project Summary**
- Project Narrative**
- Timetable**
- Description of Key Personnel Qualifications**
- SF-424A or C, Budget Information**
- Budget Narrative**
- Federally-funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment.
- Indirect Cost Statement and related documentation (when applicable)**
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure (when applicable)**
- Single Audit Reporting Statement (when applicable)**
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (when applicable)**
- Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

V. Submission Requirements

A. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration

These requirements do not apply to any individual applying for funds as a private citizen or any entity with an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under [2 CFR 25.110\(d\)](#). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and provide that number in the application; complete SAM.gov registration before submitting an application; and continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times when the entity has an active Federal award or application under consideration. **There is NO COST to register with Dun & Bradstreet or SAM.gov.** There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with Dun & Bradstreet and SAM.gov; **please be aware you can register and request help for free.**

1. Obtain a DUNS Number

Request a DUNS Number through the [Dun & Bradstreet website](#). The official website address is <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. For technical difficulties, send an email to the [D&B SAM Help Desk](#). Please ensure that you are able to receive emails from SAMHelp@dnb.com. The [Grants.gov "Obtain a DUNS Number" webpage](#) also provides detailed instructions. Once assigned a DUNS number, your organization must maintain

up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must enter their DUNS number in the “Organizational DUNS” field on the [SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance](#) form.

2. Register with SAM

Register on the [SAM.gov website](#). The official website address is <http://www.sam.gov>. The “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The [Grants.gov Register with SAM” webpage](#) also provides detailed instructions. You can also contact the supporting [Federal Service Desk](#) for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been to the entity’s DUNS or IRS information. Foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

B. Submission Dates and Times

Hard copy applications must be received at the appropriate Regional Office by September 30, 2020, at 5 P.M. (EST). A list of Service Regional Office contacts is provided below under section VIII. Agency Contacts.

Applications submitted electronically through the Grants.gov Internet site must be received by September 30, 2020. Applicants will receive notice electronically through Grants.gov to confirm receipt of the proposal.

Proposals not received by the due date will be held and may be considered for funding in the subsequent Fiscal Year if funding is available.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Prior to application submission, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the [OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website](#) and view the “State Point of Contact (SPOC) List” to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” States not on the list do not participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency. If your state is on the list, contact the designated entity for more information on the state’s prior review requirements for Federal assistance applications.

D. Funding Restrictions

Candidate conservation funds cannot be used for land or easement acquisition. In addition, pre-award costs consisting of grant-related costs incurred prior to the start date of the grant's period of performance are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the funding award and must comply with 2 CFR Part 200.458.

Prior written approval from the awarding Service Region is required. Documentation of these pre-award costs and their approval must be retained as part of the award file.

E. Submission Instructions

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by mail, or electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. Please select ONE of the submission options:

To submit an application by mail:

Number all pages of your printed application. Mail one, single-sided, unbound copy (do not staple or otherwise permanently bind pages) of your complete application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

This program encourages applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov. Follow these steps to apply through Grants.gov.

1. Register with Grants.gov

Applicants must first [register an account with Grants.gov](#) and complete all steps of the registration process before they can apply through Grants.gov. Grants.gov registration requires the entity to create an account, create an account profile, and establish authorized profile roles, including the applicant's authorized representative. Registration can take three to five business days or longer, if you do not complete the required steps in a timely manner.

2. Grants.gov Workspace Application

Grants.gov applicants apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace. To apply, the applicant will [create, complete, and submit a Workspace application package for this Funding Opportunity directly on Grants.gov](#). Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to allow time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission. When attaching files to the Grants.gov application, please do not assign file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. File names longer than 20 characters will prevent your application received by Grants.gov from automatically downloading into the Service's financial assistance management system. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up

connections, should be aware that the transmission of the application to Grants.gov takes time. Grants.gov sends either an error message or a “successfully received” message by email to the applicant’s authorized representative once the transmission is complete. Please do not end the transmission process before receiving that message.

3. Proof of Timely Submission

Grants.gov automatically generates an electronic date and time stamp in the system upon application receipt. Grants.gov sends an acknowledgement of receipt with the date and time stamp and a unique Grants.gov application tracking number to the authorized representative by email. This email from Grants.gov serves as your proof of timely submission.

VI. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

- a. To be considered for funding, projects must have the purpose of conserving species of fish, wildlife, or plants included on State lists of endangered or threatened species (but excluding any ESA-listed species), those that are candidates for ESA listing status (50 CFR 424.15), included in the Service National Listing work plan, or otherwise identified as priority at-risk species.
- b. In addition, applications must be for a project that contributes to the scientific knowledge of or addresses threats to candidate species (for a list of candidate species see <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/candidate-species.html>), other at-risk species that are included in the Service National Listing work plan (<https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/5-Year%20Listing%20Workplan%20May%20Version.pdf>), or other at-risk species that are a priority for the States and the Service.
- c. The Service will consider the following questions and factors when determining which projects to fund.

1) Importance/ Relevance and Applicability of the Proposal to Program Objectives and Priorities (30 Points)

This criterion addresses whether the proposed work addresses the **Program Objectives and Priorities** identified on pages 1-3 of this document.

If the proposal addresses the continuation of previously funded or ongoing work, reviewers should consider whether the applicant provides an adequate justification for the continuation of the same work (e.g., what benefit would additional results have?).

Scoring: 0-30 points

0 = no importance/relevance to the stated **Program Objectives and Priorities**, very limited potential to contribute to species conservation, no implementation of conservation actions

10 = moderately important relevant, reasonably likely to make some meaningful contribution to species conservation by contributing information on the species redundancy, resiliency, or representation, or improves the species redundancy, resiliency, or representation

20 = extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to the conservation of a candidate or at-risk species by addressing a lower priority action
30 = extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to the conservation of a candidate or at-risk species, or reduce the extinction risk by addressing a high priority action.

2) Technical/scientific Merit (30 Points)

For proposals addressing management and outreach, this criterion addresses whether the *Methodology* in the **Project Narrative** are appropriate for achieving the stated *Project Objectives*, whether the *Methodology* will result in successful execution of the project, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient information is provided to evaluate the design of the project relative to the stated goals/objectives.

For proposals addressing research and monitoring, this criterion addresses whether the *Methodology* in the **Project Narrative** is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate for achieving the stated *Project Objectives*, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, and if such information is sufficient, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and if data collection is proposed, the inclusion of quality assurance considerations.

For all applications, reviewers will consider whether the proposal includes an effective mechanism for evaluating the project's success in meeting the stated goals and objectives, such as whether the *Project Objectives* are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely). Reviewers will also evaluate whether application instructions contained in this document were followed and if all required elements were submitted.

Score: 0-30 points

0 = completely unsound and/or unlikely to meet the *Project Objectives*, application instructions were not followed

15 = intermediately sound, and/or reasonably likely to meet the *Project Objectives*, application instructions generally followed

30 = extremely sound and highly likely to meet the stated *Project Objectives*, application instructions followed thoroughly.

3) Overall Qualification of Applicants (20 Points)

This criterion addresses whether the applicant possesses the necessary expertise, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related experience and qualifications of the project's PM or PI, Co-Manager(s), or Co-Investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the applicant complied effectively with the application instructions in this NOFO.

Scoring: 0-20 points

0 = completely unqualified and/or lacking the resources or capacity to accomplish the project application instructions were not followed

10 = intermediate level of relevant expertise and experience and adequate resources and capacity to accomplish the project, application instructions were generally followed

20 = extremely qualified and experienced, has all necessary resources and demonstrated capacity to accomplish the project, application instructions followed thoroughly

4) Project Costs (20 Points)

Reviewers will evaluate the budget to determine if it is sufficiently detailed, realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be adequately justified and appropriately allocated. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient detail was provided to evaluate how costs were estimated.

Scoring: 0-20 points

0 = unrealistic and lacking sufficient detail

10 = adequately detailed and realistic

20 = extremely detailed and realistic

5) Emphasis to Leverage Funds/Cost Share Contributions (10 Points)

Projects will be prioritized based on how they leverage funds, weight will be given to confirmed cost share contributions.

Scoring: 0-10 points

0 = no shared projects costs

3-7 = cost share contributions between 10% - 30% of overall budget

8-10 = cost share contributions from 31% or more of overall budget.

B. Review and Selection Process

The Service will review proposals submitted for consideration for the candidate conservation action funds based on the criterion outlined above. Regional Directors (or their designee) are responsible for the administration of these funds within the Regions and will make final funding recommendations to the Director and Department of Interior. Projects should not be considered approved until they are cleared for obligation through the Service's review process for approving discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

The Service will review the status of applicants' administration of other grants, including Single Audit submissions, past performance, financial strength and management capabilities, and procedures and methods for monitoring subrecipients or vendors. Applicants in poor standing may not be considered for funding. The Service will review all proposed activities for eligibility, including consistency with the objective and purposes of the ESA, the requirements outlined in this NOFO, substantiality in character and design. Activities not eligible will be removed from consideration. This includes activities that are not considered to achieve conservation. If there are any questions about the ability of the project to be

completed in compliance with Federal laws and regulations, additional information may be requested. A project may be disqualified if Service staff determine the project cannot meet Federal requirements. Incomplete applications will be returned to sender to be corrected. This “deficiency period” will allow two weeks for corrections. Applicants that do not respond within two weeks with corrected materials may be disqualified.

Prior to reviewing FY 2020 proposals, the Service will review the current status of all applicants prior to beginning ranking. This review will include consideration of the status of previously awarded funds. Specifically, applicants who have more than 1 year of unspent candidate conservation funds at the time of submission will not be awarded new funding, except in unusual circumstances and when spending of backlog can reasonably be expected to be imminent.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the “Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification” form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the Service may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the Service may choose not to fund the selected project.

The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the Service will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in [2 CFR 200.205](#). Service programs document applicant risk evaluations using the Service’s “[Financial Assistance Recipient Risk Assessment](#)” form. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the Service is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#). The Service will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Service uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in [2 CFR 200.207](#) should be applied the award.

VII. Federal Award Administration

A. Federal Award Notices

Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the Notice of Award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. Recipient acceptance of a Federal award from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with all terms and conditions applicable to the award. Recipients indicate their acceptance of the Federal award by starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means.

B. Award Terms and Conditions

See the Service's "[Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions](#)" for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's Standard Award Terms and Conditions are available on the Internet at <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

C. Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Service will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

D. Reporting Requirements

The Service will include recipient-specific reporting requirements, including the required reports, reporting frequency, and report due dates in all Notices of Award, as applicable.

1. Financial Reports

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards lasting 12 months or less, the final reports will be the only financial and performance reports required, except in unusual circumstances or if waived. See Service policy [516 FW 1, Monitoring Financial and Performance Reporting for Financial Assistance](#) for more information.

Interim Reports: For awards that last longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial and performance reports no less frequently than annually and no more frequently than quarterly, except in unusual circumstances or if waived. Requiring a higher frequency of reporting than annual reporting will be based on the Service's assessment of higher or other unusual circumstance. Quarterly and semiannual interim reports are due within 30 calendar days of the reporting period end date. Annual interim reports are due within 90 calendar days of the reporting period end date.

2. Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** performance report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date.

3. Significant Developments Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

4. Real Property Reports

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Service will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, as applicable.

5. Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the Service immediately in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, including their employees and subrecipients, in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest include direct or indirect financial interests; close personal relationships; positions of trust in outside organizations; consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization; and decision-making authority related to the award. Conflicts of interest are those circumstances real or perceived that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the recipient or the recipients's employees or subrecipients in matters pertaining to the award. Recipients must notify the Service in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance](#), including termination of the award.

6. Other Mandatory Disclosures

The non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in [2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#) are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance](#), including suspension or debarment.

VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Please contact the appropriate Service Regional Office contacts for technical questions regarding this announcement. A list of Service Regional Office contacts is provided below.

Ecological Services Headquarters Contact

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services, Branch of Budget and Support
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: ES
Falls Church, VA 22041

Table 1. List of Regional Program Coordinators

States or Territory where the project will occur	Regional Office Address	Regional Candidate Implementation Fund Contact, Phone Number, and Email
Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Eastside Federal Complex 911 N.E. 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181	Jesse D’Elia (503/232-2329); jesse_delia@fws.gov
Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 6018 Albuquerque, NM 87102	Susan Jacobsen, (505/248-6641); susan_jacobsen@fws.gov
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services 5600 American Blvd. West Suite 990 Bloomington, Minnesota 55437-1458	Barb Hosler (517/351-6326); Barbara_hosler@fws.gov
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 400 Atlanta, GA 30345	Aaron Valenta (404/679-4144); aaron_valenta@fws.gov
Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035-9589	Martin Miller (413/253-8615); martin_miller@fws.gov

States or Territory where the project will occur	Regional Office Address	Regional Candidate Implementation Fund Contact, Phone Number, and Email
Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 134 Union Blvd., Suite 645 Lakewood, CO 80228	Angela Burgess (303/236-4263); angela_burgess@fws.gov
Alaska	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199	Drew Crane (907/786-3323); drew_crane@fws.gov
California and Nevada	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606 Sacramento, CA 95825-1846	Karen "Kitti" Jensen (916/414-6557); karen_jensen@fws.gov